



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

March 26, 2012

Harris Vegetation Management Project
J. Sharon Heywood, Forest Supervisor
Attn: Ann Glubczynski
Shasta-McCloud Management Unit
P.O. Box 1620
McCloud, CA 96057

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Harris Vegetation Management Project,
Siskiyou County, California (CEQ# 20120034)

Dear Ms. Heywood:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is providing comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Harris Vegetation Management Project. Our review and comments are pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The Forest Service's proposed alternative (Alternative 1) will manage vegetation on approximately 2,800 acres through thinning and underburning in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest System land located approximately 23 miles northeast of McCloud, California. The 9,200 acre project area includes the Harris Mountain Late-successional Reserve.

We have rated the action alternatives in the DEIS as Lack of Objections (LO) (see enclosed "*Summary of Rating Definitions*"). We recognize the long-term benefits of promoting biodiversity, restoring natural ecological processes within the Harris Mountain Late-Successional Reserve, and the inclusion of the resource protection measures and best management practices described in the DEIS. EPA supports the Forest Service's inclusion of Alternative 2 among the action alternatives, in light of biological concerns regarding habitat connectivity and the Northern Spotted Owl. Furthermore, EPA suggests that Alternative 2 is the environmentally preferable alternative.

EPA commends the Forest Service for providing information related to climate change trends. This contributes to improved federal planning and public understanding of the effects of climate change on forest ecosystems and forest management. We also commend the Forest Service on a project design that calls for the decommissioning of 2 miles of unnecessary roads. We encourage the Forest Service to add information in the FEIS regarding the decommissioning of fuel breaks, skid trails and road side landings after the project objectives have been met. We recommend scarifying the surface to break up compacted soils, seeding with native vegetation, and blocking these areas from vehicle traffic with rocks and barricades or a combination of these.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the DEIS. When the FEIS is released, please send one hard copy and two electronic copies to the address above (mail code: **CED-2**). If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3521, or have your staff contact James Munson, the lead reviewer for this project. James can be reached at (415) 972-3800 or munson.james@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathleen Martyn Goforth", written over a horizontal line.

Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division

Enclosures: Summary of EPA Rating Definitions